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Rasselas

# THE PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

## A TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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THE

# THE HISTORY OF RASSELAS, PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

## CHAP. I.

### Deſcription of a palace in a valley.

YE who who liſten with credulity to the whiſpers of fancy, and purſue with eagerneſs the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promiſes of youth, and that the deficiencies of the preſent day will be ſupplied by the morrow; attend to the hiſtory of Raſſelas prince of Abiſſinia.

Raſſelas was the fourth ſon of the mighty emperor, in whoſe dominions the Father of waters begins his courſe; whoſe bounty pours down the ſtreams of plenty, and ſcatters over half the world the harveſts of Egypt.

According to the cuſtom which has deſcended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, he was confined in a private palace, with the other ſons and daughters of Abiſſinian royalty, till the order of ſucceſſion ſhould call him to the throne.

The place, which the wiſdom or policy of antiquity had deſtined for the reſidence of the Abiſſinian princes, was a ſpacious valley in the kingdom of Amhara, ſurrounded on every ſide by mountains, of which the ſummits overhang the middle part. The only paſſage, by which it could be entered,

was

was a cavern that paſſed under a rock, of which it has long been diſputed whether it was the work of nature or of human induſtry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the mouth which opened into the valley was cloſed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, ſo maſſy that no man could, without the help of engines, open or ſhut them.

From the mountains on every ſide, rivulets deſcended that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle, inhabited by fiſh of every ſpecies, and frequented by every fowl whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. This lake diſcharged its ſuperfluities by a ſtream which entered a dark cleft of the mountain on the northern ſide, and fell with dreadful noiſe from precipice to precipice till it was heard no more.

The ſides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diverſified with flowers; every blaſt ſhook ſpices from the rocks, and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the graſs, or bruiſe the ſhrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extenſive circuit, ſecured from beaſts of prey by the mountains which confined them. On one part were flocks and herds feeding in the paſtures, on another all the beaſts of chaſe friſking in the lawns; the ſpritely kid was bounding on rocks, the ſubtle monkey frolicking in the trees, and the ſolemn elephant repoſing in the ſhade. All the diverſities of the world were brought together, the bleſſings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded.

The valley, wide and fruitful, ſupplied its inhabitants with the neceſſaries of life, and all delights and ſuperfluities were added at the annual viſit which the emperor paid his children, when the iron gate was opened to the

the ſound of muſick; and during eight days every one that reſided in the valley was required to propoſe whatever might contribute to make ſecluſion pleaſant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and leſſen the tedioufneſs of time. Every deſire was immediately granted. All the artificers of pleaſure were called to gladden the feſtivity; the muſicians exerted the power of harmony, and the dancers ſhewed their activity before the princes, in hope that they ſhould paſs their lives in this bliſsful captivity, to which theſe only were admitted whoſe performance was thought able to add novelty to luxury. Such was the appearance of ſecurity and delight which this retirement afforded, that they to whom it was new always deſired that it might be perpetual; and as thoſe, on whom the iron gate had once cloſed were never ſuffered to return, the effect of longer experience could not be known. Thus every year produced new ſchemes of delight, and new competitors for impriſonment.

The palace ſtood on an eminence, raiſed about thirty paces above the ſurface of the lake. It was divided into many ſquares or courts, built with greater or leſs magnificence, according to the rank of thoſe for whom they were deſigned. The roofs were turned into arches of maſſy ſtone, joined with a cement that grew harder by time, and the building ſtood from century to century, deriding the ſolſtitial rains and equinoctial hurricanes, without need of reparation.

This houſe, which was ſo large as to be fully known to none but ſome ancient officers, who ſucceſſively inherited the ſecrets of the place, was built as if ſuſpicion herſelf had dictated the plan. To every room there was an open and ſecret paſſage, every ſquare had a communication with the reſt, either from the upper ſtories by private galleries, or by ſubterranean paſſages from the lower apartments. Many of the columns had unſuſpected

cavities,

cavities, in which ſucceſſive monarchs repoſited their treaſures. They then cloſed up the opening with marble, which was never to be removed but in the utmoſt exigencies of the kingdom; and recorded their accumulations in a book which was itſelf concealed in a tower not entered but by the emperor, attended by the prince who ſtood next in ſucceſſion.

## CHAP. II.

### The diſcontent of Raſſelas in the happy valley.

HERE the ſons and daughters of Abiſſinia lived only to know the ſoft viciſſitudes of pleaſure and repoſe, attended by all that were ſkilful to delight, and gratified with whatever the ſenſes can enjoy. They wandered in gardens of fragrance, and ſlept in the fortreſſes of ſecurity. Every art was practiſed to make them pleaſed with their own condition. The ſages who inſtructed them, told them of nothing but the miſeries

of publick life, and deſcribed all beyond the mountains as regions of calamity, where diſcord was always raging, and where man preyed upon man.

To heighten their opinion of their own felicity, they were daily entertained with ſongs, the ſubject of which was the *happy valley*. Their appetites were excited by frequent enumerations of different enjoyments, and revelry and merriment was the buſineſs of every hour from the dawn of morning to the cloſe of even.

Theſe methods were generally ſucceſsful; few of the princes had ever wiſhed to enlarge their bounds, but paſſed their lives in full conviction that they had all within their reach that art or nature could beſtow, and pitied thoſe whom fate had excluded from this ſeat of tranquillity, as the ſport of chance, and the ſlaves of miſery.

Thus

Thus they roſe in the morning, and lay down at night, pleaſed with each other and with themſelves, all but Raſſelas, who, in the twenty-ſixth year of his age, began to withdraw himſelf from their paſtimes and aſſemblies, and to delight in ſolitary walks and ſilent meditation. He often ſat before tables covered with luxury, and forgot to taſte the dainties that were placed before him: he roſe abruptly in the midſt of the ſong, and haſtily retired beyond the ſound of muſick. His attendants obſerved the change, and endeavoured to renew his love of pleaſure: he neglected their endeavours, repulſed their invitations, and ſpent day after day on the banks of rivulets ſheltered with trees, where he ſometimes liſtened to the birds in the branches, ſometimes obſerved the fiſh playing in the ſtream, and anon caſt his eyes upon the paſtures and mountains filled with animals, of which ſome were biting the herbage, and ſome ſleeping among the buſhes.

This ſingularity of his humour made him much obſerved. One of the Sages, in whoſe converſation he had formerly delighted, followed him ſecretly, in hope of diſcovering the cauſe of his diſquiet. Raſſelas, who knew not that any one was near him, having for ſome time fixed his eyes upon the goats that were brouſing among the rocks, began to compare their condition with his own.

"What," ſaid he, "makes the difference between man and all the reſt of the animal creation? Every beaſt that ſtrays beſide me has the ſame corporal neceſſities with myſelf; he is hungry and crops the graſs, he is thirſty and drinks the ſtream, his thirſt and hunger are appeaſed, he is ſatisfied and ſleeps; he riſes again and is hungry, he is again fed and is at reſt. I am hungry and thirſty like him, but when thirſt and hunger ceaſe I am not at reſt; I am, like him, pained with want, but am not, like him, ſatisfied with fulneſs.

The

The intermediate hours are tedious and gloomy; I long again to be hungry that I may again quicken my attention. The birds peck the berries or the corn, and fly away to the groves where they ſit in ſeeming happineſs on the branches, and waſte their lives in tuning one unvaried ſeries of ſounds. I likewiſe can call the lutaniſt and the ſinger, but the ſounds that pleaſed me yeſterday weary me to day, and will grow yet more weariſome to-morrow. I can diſcover within me no power of perception which is not glutted with its proper pleaſure, yet I do not feel myſelf delighted. Man has ſurely ſome latent ſenſe for which this place affords no gratification, or he has ſome deſires diſtinct from ſenſe, which muſt be ſatisfied before he can be happy."

After this he lifted up his head, and ſeeing the moon riſing, walked towards the palace. As he paſſed through the fields, and ſaw the animals around him, "Ye, ſaid he, are happy, and need not envy me that walk thus among

among you, burthened with myſelf; nor do I, ye gentle beings, envy your felicity; for it is not the felicity of man. I have many diſtreſſes from which ye are free; I fear pain when I do not feel it; I ſometimes ſhrink at evils recollected, and ſometimes ſtart at evils anticipated: ſurely the equity of providence has ballanced peculiar ſufferings with peculiar enjoyments."

With obſervations like theſe the prince amuſed himſelf as he returned, uttering them with a plaintive voice, yet with a look that diſcovered him to feel ſome complacence in his own perſpicacity, and to receive ſome ſolace of the miſeries of life, from conſciouſneſs of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them. He mingled cheerfully in the diverſions of the evening, and all rejoiced to find that his heart was lightened.

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

### The wants of him that wants nothing.

ON the next day his old inſtructor, imagining that he had now made himſelf acquainted with his diſeaſe of mind, was in hope of curing it by counſel, and officiouſly ſought an opportunity of conference, which the prince having long conſidered him as one whoſe intellects were exhauſted, was not very willing to afford: "Why, ſaid he, does this man thus intrude upon me; ſhall I be never ſuffered to forget thoſe lectures which pleaſed only while they were new, and to become new again muſt be forgotten?" He then walked into the wood, and compoſed himſelf to his uſual meditations; when, before his thoughts had taken any ſettled form, he perceived his purſuer at his ſide, and was at firſt prompted by his impatience

tience to go haſtily away; but, being unwilling to offend a man whom he had once reverenced and ſtill loved, he invited him to ſit down with him on the bank.

The old man, thus encouraged, began to lament the change which had been lately obſerved in the prince, and to enquire why he ſo often retired from the pleaſures of the palace, to lonelineſs and ſilence. "I fly from pleaſure, ſaid the prince, becauſe pleaſure has ceaſed to pleaſe; I am lonely becauſe I am miſerable, and am unwilling to cloud with my preſence the happineſs of others." "You, Sir, ſaid the ſage, are the firſt who has complained of miſery in the *happy valley*. I hope to convince you that your complaints have no real cauſe. You are here in full poſſeſſion of all that the emperor of Abiſſinia can beſtow; here is neither labour to be endured, nor danger to be dreaded, yet here is all that labour or danger can procure. Look round and tell me which of

of your wants is without ſupply: if you want nothing, how are you unhappy?"

"That I want nothing, ſaid the prince, or that I know not what I want, is the cauſe of my complaint; if I had any known want, I ſhould have a certain wiſh; that wiſh would excite endeavour, and I ſhould not then repine to ſee the ſun move ſo ſlowly towards the weſtern mountain, or lament when the day breaks and ſleep will no longer hide me from myſelf. When I ſee the kids and the lambs chaſing one another, I fancy that I ſhould be happy if I had ſomething to purſue. But, poſſeſſing all that I can want, I find one day and one hour exactly like another, except that the latter is ſtill more tedious than the former. Let your experience inform me how the day may now ſeem as ſhort as in my childhood, while nature was yet freſh, and every moment ſhewed me what I never had obſerved before. I have already enjoyed too much; give me ſomething to deſire."

The

The old man was ſurpriſed at this new ſpecies of affliction, and knew not what to reply, yet was unwilling to be ſilent. "Sir, ſaid he, if you had ſeen the miſeries of the world, you would know how to value your preſent ſtate." "Now, ſaid the prince, you have given me ſomething to deſire; I ſhall long to ſee the miſeries of the world, ſince the ſight of them is neceſſary to happineſs."

## CHAP. IV.

### The prince continues to grieve and muſe.

AT this time the ſound of muſick proclaimed the hour of repaſt, and the converſation was concluded. The old man went away ſufficiently diſcontented to find that his reaſonings had produced the only concluſion which they were intended to prevent. But in the decline of life, ſhame

and

and grief are of ſhort duration; whether it be that we bear eaſily what we have borne long, or that, finding ourſelves in age leſs regarded, we leſs regard others; or, that we look with ſlight regard upon afflictions, to which we know that the hand of death is about to put an end.

The prince, whoſe views were extended to a wider ſpace, could not ſpeedily quiet his emotions. He had been before terrified at the length of life which nature promiſed him, becauſe he conſidered that in a long time much muſt be endured; he now rejoiced in his youth, becauſe in many years much might be done.

This firſt beam of hope, that had been ever darted into his mind, rekindled youth in his cheeks, and doubled the luſtre of his eyes. He was fired with the deſire of doing ſomething, though he knew not yet with diſtinctneſs, either end or means.

He

He was now no longer gloomy and unſocial; but, conſidering himſelf as maſter of a ſecret ſtock of happineſs, which he could enjoy only by concealing it, he affected to be buſy in all ſchemes of diverſion, and endeavoured to make others pleaſed with the ſtate of which he himſelf was weary. But pleaſures never can be ſo multiplied or continued, as not to leave much of life unemployed; there were many hours, both of the night and day, which he could ſpend without ſuſpicion in ſolitary thought. The load of life was much lightened: he went eagerly into the aſſemblies, becauſe he ſuppoſed the frequency of his preſence neceſſary to the ſucceſs of his purpoſes; he retired gladly to privacy, becauſe he had now a ſubject of thought.

His chief amuſement was to picture to himſelf that world which he had never ſeen; to place himſelf in various conditions; to be entan-

entangled in imaginary difficulties, and to be engaged in wild adventures: but his benevolence always terminated his projects in the relief of diſtreſs, the detection of fraud, the defeat of oppreſſion, and the diffuſion of happineſs.

Thus paſſed twenty months of the life of Raſſelas. He buſied himſelf ſo intenſely in viſionary buſtle, that he forgot his real ſolitude; and, amidſt hourly preparations for the various incidents of human affairs, neglected to conſider by what means he ſhould mingle with mankind.

One day, as he was ſitting on a bank, he feigned to himſelf an orphan virgin robbed of her little portion by a treacherous lover, and crying after him for reſtitution and redreſs. So ſtrongly was the image impreſſed upon his mind, that he ſtarted up in the maid's defence, and ran forward to ſeize the plunderer with all the eagerneſs of real purſuit.

Fear

Fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt. Raſſelas could not catch the fugitive with his utmoſt efforts; but, reſolving to weary, by perſeverance, him whom he could not ſurpaſs in ſpeed, he preſſed on till the foot of the mountain ſtopped his courſe.

Here he recollected himſelf, and ſmiled at his own uſeleſs impetuoſity. Then raiſing his eyes to the mountain, "This, ſaid he, is the fatal obſtacle that hinders at once the enjoyment of pleaſure, and the exerciſe of virtue. How long is it that my hopes and wiſhes have flown beyond this boundary of my life, which yet I never have attempted to ſurmount!"

Struck with this reflection, he ſat down to muſe, and remembered, that ſince he firſt reſolved to eſcape from his confinement, the ſun had paſſed twice over him in his annual courſe. He now felt a degree of regret with which he had never been before acquainted.

quainted. He conſidered how much might have been done in the time which had paſſed, and left nothing real behind it. He compared twenty months with the life of man. "In life, ſaid he, is not to be counted the ignorance of infancy, or imbecility of age. We are long before we are able to think, and we ſoon ceaſe from the power of acting. The true period of human exiſtence may be reaſonably eſtimated at forty years, of which I have muſed away the four and twentieth part. What I have loſt was certain, for I have certainly poſſeſſed it; but of twenty months to come who can aſſure me?"

The conſciouſneſs of his own folly pierced him deeply, and he was long before he could be reconciled to himſelf. "The reſt of my time, ſaid he, has been loſt by the crime or folly of my anceſtors, and the abſurd inſtitutions of my country; I remember it with diſguſt, but without remorſe: but the months that have paſſed ſince new light darted into my

my ſoul, ſince I formed a ſcheme of reaſonable felicity, have been ſquandered by my own fault. I have loſt that which can never be reſtored: I have ſeen the ſun riſe and ſet for twenty months, an idle gazer on the light of heaven: In this time the birds have left the neſt of their mother, and committed themſelves to the woods and to the ſkies: the kid has forſaken the teat, and learned by degrees to climb the rocks in queſt of independant ſuſtenance. I only have made no advances, but am ſtill helpleſs and ignorant. The moon, by more than twenty changes, admoniſhed me of the flux of life; the ſtream that rolled before my feet upbraided my inactivity. I ſat feaſting on intellectual luxury, regardleſs alike of the examples of the earth, and the inſtructions of the planets. Twenty months are paſt, who ſhall reſtore them!"

Theſe ſorrowful meditations faſtened upon his mind; he paſt four months in reſolving to loſe no more time in idle reſolves, and was awakened

awakened to more vigorous exertion by hearing a maid, who had broken a porcelain cup, remark, that what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.

This was obvious; and Raſſelas reproached himſelf that he had not diſcovered it, having not known, or not conſidered, how many uſeful hints are obtained by chance, and how often the mind, hurried by her own ardour to diſtant views, neglects the truths that lie open before her. He, for a few hours, regretted his regret, and from that time bent his whole mind upon the means of eſcaping from the valley of happineſs.

## CHAP. V.

### The Prince meditates his eſcape.

HE now found that it would be very difficult to effect that which it was very eaſy to ſuppoſe effected. When he looked

looked round about him, he ſaw himſelf confined by the bars of nature which had never yet been broken, and by the gate, through which none that once had paſſed it were ever able to return. He was now impatient as an eagle in a grate. He paſſed week after week in clambering the mountains, to ſee if there was any aperture which the buſhes might conceal, but found all the ſummits inacceſſible by their prominence. The iron gate he deſpaired to open; for it was not only ſecured with all the power of art, but was always watched by ſucceſſive ſentinels, and was by its poſition expoſed to the perpetual obſervation of all the inhabitants.

He then examined the cavern through which the waters of the lake were diſcharged; and, looking down at a time when the ſun ſhone ſtrongly upon its mouth, he diſcovered it to be full of broken rocks, which, though they permitted the ſtream to flow through many narrow paſſages, would ſtop

any

any body of ſolid bulk. He returned diſcouraged and dejected; but, having now known the bleſſing of hope, reſolved never to deſpair.

In theſe fruitleſs ſearches he ſpent ten months. The time, however, paſſed chearfully away: in the morning he roſe with new hope, in the evening applauded his own diligence, and in the night ſlept ſound after his fatigue. He met a thouſand amuſements which beguiled his labour, and diverſified his thoughts. He diſcerned the various inſtincts of animals, and properties of plants, and found the place replete with wonders, of which he purpoſed to ſolace himſelf with the contemplation, if he ſhould never be able to accompliſh his flight; rejoicing that his endeavours, though yet unſucceſsful, had ſupplied him with a ſource of inexhauſtible enquiry.

But his original curioſity was not yet abated; he reſolved to obtain ſome know-

ledge of the ways of men. His wiſh ſtill continued, but his hope grew leſs. He ceaſed to ſurvey any longer the walls of his priſon, and ſpared to ſearch by new toils for interſtices which he knew could not be found, yet determined to keep his deſign always in view, and lay hold on any expedient that time ſhould offer.

## CHAP. VI.

### A diſſertation on the art of flying.

AMONG the artiſts that had been allured into the happy valley, to labour for the accommodation and pleaſure of its inhabitants, was a man eminent for his knowledge of the mechanick powers, who had contrived many engines both of uſe and recreation. By a wheel, which the ſtream turned, he forced the water into a tower, whence it was diſtributed to all the apartments of the palace. He erected a pavillion in the gar-

den,

den, around which he kept the air always cool by artificial ſhowers. One of the groves, appropriated to the ladies, was ventilated by fans, to which the rivulet that run through it gave a conſtant motion; and inſtruments of ſoft muſick were placed at proper diſtances, of which ſome played by the impulſe of the wind, and ſome by the power of the ſtream.

This artiſt was ſometimes viſited by Raſſelas, who was pleaſed with every kind of knowledge, imagining that the time would come, when all his acquiſitions ſhould be of uſe to him in the open world. He came one day to amuſe himſelf in his uſual manner, and found the maſter buſy in building a ſailing chariot: he ſaw that the deſign was practicable upon a level ſurface, and with expreſſions of great eſteem ſolicited its completion. The workman was pleaſed to find himſelf ſo much regarded by the prince, and reſolved to gain yet higher honours. "Sir, ſaid he, you have ſeen but a ſmall part of what the mechanick

ſciences can perform. I have been long of opinion, that, inſtead of the tardy conveyance of ſhips and chariots, man might uſe the ſwifter migration of wings; that the fields of air are open to knowledge, and that only ignorance and idleneſs need crawl upon the ground."

This hint rekindled the prince's deſire of paſſing the mountains; and having ſeen what the mechaniſt had already performed, he was willing to fancy that he could do more; yet reſolved to enquire further before he ſuffered hope to afflict him by diſappointment. "I am afraid, ſaid he to the artiſt, that your imagination prevails over your ſkill, and that you now tell me rather what you wiſh than what you know. Every animal has his element aſſigned him; the birds have the air, and man and beaſts the earth." "So, replied the mechaniſt, fiſhes have the water, in which yet beaſts can ſwim by nature, and men by art. He that can

ſwim

ſwim needs not deſpair to fly: to ſwim is to fly in a groſſer fluid, and to fly is to ſwim in a ſubtler. We are only to proportion our power of reſiſtance to the different denſity of the matter through which we are to paſs. You will be neceſſarily upborne by the air, if you can renew any impulſe upon it, faſter than the air can recede from the preſſure."

"But the exerciſe of ſwimming, ſaid the prince, is very laborious; the ſtrongeſt limbs are ſoon wearied; I am afraid the act of flying will be yet more violent, and wings will be of no great uſe, unleſs we can fly further than we can ſwim."

"The labour of riſing from the ground, ſaid the artiſt, will be great, as we ſee it in the heavier domeſtick fowls; but, as we mount higher, the earth's attraction, and the body's gravity, will be gradually diminiſhed, till we ſhall arrive at a region where the man will float in the air without any ten-

dency to fall: no care will then be neceſſary, but to move forwards, which the gentleſt impulſe will effect. You, Sir, whoſe curioſity is ſo extenſive, will eaſily conceive with what pleaſure a philoſopher, furniſhed with wings, and hovering in the ſky, would ſee the earth, and all its inhabitants, rolling beneath him, and preſenting to him ſucceſſively, by its diurnal motion, all the countries within the ſame parallel. How muſt it amuſe the pendent ſpectator to ſee the moving ſcene of land and ocean, cities and deſarts! To ſurvey with equal ſecurity the marts of trade, and the fields of battle; mountains infeſted by barbarians, and fruitful regions gladdened by plenty, and lulled by peace! How eaſily ſhall we then trace the Nile through all his paſſage; paſs over to diſtant regions, and examine the face of nature from one extremity of the earth to the other!"

"All

"All this, ſaid the prince, is much to be deſired, but I am afraid that no man will be able to breathe in theſe regions of ſpeculation and tranquillity. I have been told, that reſpiration is difficult upon lofty mountains, yet from theſe precipices, though ſo high as to produce great tenuity of the air, it is very eaſy to fall: and I ſuſpect, that from any height, where life can be ſupported, there may be danger of too quick deſcent."

"Nothing, replied the artiſt, will ever be attempted, if all poſſible objections muſt be firſt overcome. If you will favour my project, I will try the firſt flight at my own hazard. I have conſidered the ſtructure of all volant animals, and find the folding continuity of the bat's wings moſt eaſily accommodated to the human form. Upon this model I ſhall begin my taſk to morrow, and in a year expect to tower into the air beyond the malice or purſuit of man. But I will work only on

this condition, that the art ſhall not be divulged, and that you ſhall not require me to make wings for any but ourſelves."

"Why, ſaid Raſſelas, ſhould you envy others ſo great an advantage? All ſkill ought to be exerted for univerſal good; every man has owed much to others; and ought to repay the kindneſs that he has received."

"If men were all virtuous, returned the artiſt, I ſhould with great alacrity teach them all to fly. But what would be the ſecurity of the good, if the bad could at pleaſure invade them from the ſky? Againſt an army ſailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor ſeas, could afford any ſecurity. A flight of northern ſavages might hover in the wind, and light at once with irreſiſtible violence upon the capital of a fruitful region that was rolling under them. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happineſs, might be

be violated by the ſudden deſcent of ſome of the naked nations that ſwarm on the coaſt of the ſouthern ſea."

The prince promiſed ſecrecy, and waited for the performance, not wholly hopeleſs of ſucceſs. He viſited the work from time to time, obſerved its progreſs, and remarked the ingenious contrivances to facilitate motion, and unite levity with ſtrength. The artiſt was every day more certain, that he ſhould leave vultures and eagles behind him, and the contagion of his confidence ſeized upon the prince.

In a year the wings were finiſhed, and, on a morning appointed, the maker appeared furniſhed for flight on a little promontory: he waved his pinions a while to gather air, then leaped from his ſtand, and in an inſtant dropped into the lake. His wings, which were of no uſe in the air, ſuſtained him in the water, and the prince

drew him to land, half dead with terror and vexation.

## CHAP. VII.

### The prince finds a man of learning.

THE prince was not much afflicted by this diſaſter, having ſuffered himſelf to hope for a happier event, only becauſe he had no other means of eſcape in view. He ſtill perſiſted in his deſign to leave the happy valley by the firſt opportunity.

His imagination was now at a ſtand; he had no proſpect of entering into the world; and, notwithſtanding all his endeavours to ſupport himſelf, diſcontent by degrees preyed upon him, and he began again to loſe his thoughts in ſadneſs, when the rainy ſeaſon, which in theſe countries is periodical, made it inconvenient to wander in the woods.

The rain continued longer and with more violence than had been ever known: the clouds broke on the ſurrounding mountains, and the torrents ſtreamed into the plain on every ſide, till the cavern was too narrow to diſcharge the water. The lake overflowed its banks, and all the level of the valley was covered with the inundation. The eminence on which the palace was built, and ſome other ſpots of riſing ground, were all that the eye could now diſcover. The herds and flocks left the paſtures, and both the wild beaſts and the tame retreated to the mountains.

This inundation confined all the princes to domeſtick amuſements, and the attention of Raſſelas was particularly ſeized by a poem, which Imlac recited, upon the various conditions of humanity. He commanded the poet to attend him in his apartment, and recite his verſes a ſecond time; then entering into familiar talk, he thought himſelf happy

in having found a man who knew the world ſo well, and could ſo ſkilfully paint the ſcenes of life. He aſked a thouſand queſtions about things, to which, though common to all other mortals, his confinement from childhood had kept him a ſtranger. The poet pitied his ignorance, and loved his curioſity, and entertained him from day to day with novelty and inſtruction, ſo that the prince regretted the neceſſity of ſleep, and longed till the morning ſhould renew his pleaſure.

As they were ſitting together, the prince commanded Imlac to relate his hiſtory, and to tell by what accident he was forced, or by what motive induced, to cloſe his life in the happy valley. As he was going to begin his narrative, Raſſelas was called to a concert, and obliged to reſtrain his curioſity till the evening.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VIII.

### The hiſtory of Imlac.

THE cloſe of the day is, in the regions of the torrid zone, the only ſeaſon of diverſion and entertainment, and it was therefore mid-night before the muſick ceaſed, and the princeſſes retired. Raſſelas then called for his companion and required him to begin the ſtory of his life.

"Sir, ſaid Imlac, my hiſtory will not be long: the life that is devoted to knowledge paſſes ſilently away, and is very little diverſified by events. To talk in public, to think in ſolitude, to read and to hear, to inquire, and anſwer inquiries, is the buſineſs of a ſcholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terror, and is neither known nor valued but by men like himſelf.

"I

"I was born in the kingdom of Goiama, at no great diſtance from the fountain of the Nile. My father was a wealthy merchant, and traded between the inland countries of Africk and the ports of the red ſea. He was honeſt, frugal, and diligent, but of mean ſentiments, and narrow comprehenſion: he deſired only to be rich, and to conceal his riches, leſt he ſhould be ſpoiled by the governors of the province."

"Surely, ſaid the prince, my father muſt be negligent of his charge, if any man in his dominions dares take that which belongs to another. Does he not know that kings are accountable for injuſtice permitted as well as done? If I were emperor not the meaneſt of my ſubjects ſhould be oppreſſed with impunity. My blood boils when I am told that a merchant durſt not enjoy his honeſt gains, for fear of loſing by the rapacity of power. Name the governor who robbed

the people, that I may declare his crimes to the emperor."

"Sir, ſaid Imlac, your ardour is the natural effect of virtue animated by youth: the time will come when you will acquit your father, and perhaps hear with leſs impatience of the governor. Oppreſſion is, in the Abiſſinian dominions, neither frequent nor tolerated; but no form of government has been yet diſcovered, by which cruelty can be wholly prevented. Subordination ſuppoſes power on one part and ſubjection on the other; and if power be in the hands of men, it will ſometimes be abuſed. The vigilance of the ſupreme magiſtrate may do much, but much will ſtill remain undone. He can never know all the crimes that are committed, and can ſeldom puniſh all that he knows."

"This, ſaid the prince, I do not underſtand, but I had rather hear thee than diſpute. Continue thy narration."

"My

"My father, proceeded Imlac, originally intended that I ſhould have no other education, than ſuch as might qualify me for commerce; and diſcovering in me great ſtrength of memory, and quickneſs of apprehenſion, often declared his hope, that I ſhould be ſome time the richeſt man in Abiſſinia."

"Why, ſaid the prince, did thy father deſire the increaſe of his wealth, when it was already greater than he durſt diſcover or enjoy? I am unwilling to doubt thy veracity, yet inconſiſtencies cannot both be true."

"Inconſiſtencies, anſwered Imlac, cannot both be right, but, imputed to man, they may both be true. Yet diverſity is not inconſiſtency. My father might expect a time of greater ſecurity. However, ſome deſire is neceſſary to keep life in motion, and he, whoſe real wants are ſupplied, muſt admit thoſe of fancy."

"This

"This, ſaid the prince, I can in ſome meaſure conceive. I repent that I interrupted thee."

"With this hope, proceeded Imlac, he ſent me to ſchool; but when I had once found the delight of knowledge, and felt the pleaſure of intelligence and the pride of invention, I began ſilently to deſpiſe riches, and determined to diſappoint the purpoſe of my father, whoſe groſſneſs of conception raiſed my pity. I was twenty years old before his tenderneſs would expoſe me to the fatigue of travel, in which time I had been inſtructed, by ſucceſſive maſters, in all the literature of my native country. As every hour taught me ſomething new, I lived in a continual courſe of gratifications; but, as I advanced towards manhood, I loſt much of the reverence with which I had been uſed to look on my inſtructors; becauſe, when the leſſon was ended, I did not find them wiſer or better than common men. At

"At length my father reſolved to initiate me in commerce, and, opening one of his ſubterranean treaſuries, counted out ten thouſand pieces of gold. This, young man, ſaid he, is the ſtock with which you muſt negociate. I began with leſs than the fifth part, and you ſee how diligence and parſimony have increaſed it. This is your own to waſte or to improve. If you ſquander it by negligence or caprice, you muſt wait for my death before you will be rich: if, in four years, you double your ſtock, we will thenceforward let ſubordination ceaſe, and live together as friends and partners; for he ſhall always be equal witb me, who is equally ſkilled in the art of growing rich.

"We laid our money upon camels, concealed in bales of cheap goods, and travelled to the ſhore of the red ſea. When I caſt my eye on the expanſe of waters, my heart bounded like that of a priſoner eſcaped. I felt an unextinguiſhable

unextinguiſhable curioſity kindle in my mind, and reſolved to ſnatch this opportunity of ſeeing the manners of other nations, and of learning ſciences unknown in Abiſſinia.

"I remembered that my father had obliged me to the improvement of my ſtock, not by a promiſe which I ought not to violate, but by a penalty which I was at liberty to incur, and therefore determined to gratify my predominant deſire, and by drinking at the fountains of knowledge, to quench the thirſt of curioſity.

"As I was ſuppoſed to trade without connexion with my father, it was eaſy for me to become acquainted with the maſter of a ſhip, and procure a paſſage to ſome other country. I had no motives of choice to regulate my voyage; it was ſufficient for me that, wherever I wandered, I ſhould ſee a country which I had

I had not ſeen before. I therefore entered a ſhip bound for Surat, having left a letter for my father declaring my intention.

## CHAP. IX.

### The hiſtory of Imlac continued.

WHEN I firſt entered upon the world of waters, and loſt ſight of land, I looked round about me with pleaſing terror, and thinking my ſoul enlarged by the boundleſs proſpect, imagined that I could gaze round for ever without ſatiety; but, in a ſhort time, I grew weary of looking on barren uniformity, where I could only ſee again what I had already ſeen. I then deſcended into the ſhip, and doubted for a while whether all my future pleaſures would not end like this in diſguſt and diſappointment. Yet, ſurely, ſaid I, the ocean and the land are very different; the only variety of water is reſt and

and motion, but the earth has mountains and vallies, deſarts and cities: it is inhabited by men of different cuſtoms and contrary opinions; and I may hope to find variety in life, though I ſhould miſs it in nature.

"With this hope I quieted my mind, and amuſed myſelf during the voyage; ſometimes by learning from the ſailors the art of navigation, which I have never practiſed, and ſometimes by forming ſchemes for my conduct in different ſituations, in not one of which I have been ever placed.

"I was almoſt weary of my naval amuſements when we landed ſafely at Surat. I ſecured my money, and purchaſing ſome commodities for ſhow, joined myſelf to a caravan that was paſſing into the inland country. My companions, for ſome reaſon or other, conjecturing that I was rich, and by my inquiries and admiration, finding that I was ignorant,

con-

conſidered me as a novice whom they had a right to cheat, and who was to learn at the uſual expence the art of fraud. They expoſed me to the theft of ſervants, and exaction of officers, and ſaw me plundered upon falſe pretences, without any advantage to themſelves, but that of rejoicing in the ſuperiority of their own knowledge."

"Stop a moment, ſaid the prince, is there ſuch depravity in man, as that he ſhould injure another without benefit to himſelf? I can eaſily conceive that all are pleaſed with ſuperiority: but your ignorance was merely accidental, which, being neither your crime nor your folly, could afford them no reaſon to applaud themſelves; and the knowledge which they had, and which you wanted, they might as effectually have ſhewn by warning you, as betraying you."

"Pride, ſaid Imlac, is ſeldom delicate, it will pleaſe itſelf with very mean advantages;

tages; and envy feels not its own happineſs, but when it may be compared with the miſery of others. They were my enemies becauſe they thought me rich, and my oppreſſors becauſe they delighted to find me weak."

"Proceed, ſaid the prince: I doubt not of the facts which you relate, but imagine that you impute them to miſtaken motives."

"In this company, ſaid Imlac, I arrived at Agra, the capital of Indoſtan, the city in which the great Mogul commonly reſides. I applied myſelf to the language of the country, and in a few months was able to converſe with the learned men; ſome of whom I found moroſe and reſerved, and others eaſy and communicative; ſome were unwilling to teach another, what they had with difficulty learned themſelves; and ſome ſhewed that the end of their ſtudies was to gain the dignity of inſtructing.

"To

" To the tutor of the young princes I recommended myſelf ſo much, that I was preſented to the emperor as a man of uncommon knowledge. The emperor aſked me many queſtions concerning my country and my travels; and though I cannot now recollect any thing that he uttered above the power of a common man, he diſmiſſed me, aſtoniſhed at his wiſdom, and enamoured of his goodneſs.

" My credit was now ſo high, that the merchants, with whom I had travelled, applied to me for recommendations to the ladies of the court. I was ſurprized at their confidence of ſolicitation and gently reproached them with their practices on the road. They heard me with cold indifference, and ſhewed no tokens of ſhame or ſorrow.

" They then urged their requeſt with the offer of a bribe; but what I would not

do

do for kindneſs I would not do for money; and refuſed them, not becauſe they had injured me, but becauſe I would not enable them to injure others; for I knew they would have made uſe of my credit to cheat thoſe who ſhould buy their wares.

"Having reſided at Agra, till there was no more to be learned, I travelled into Perſia, where I ſaw many remains of ancient magnificence, and obſerved many new accommodations of life. The Perſians are a nation eminently ſocial, and their aſſemblies afforded me daily opportunities of remarking characters and manners, and of tracing human nature through all its variations.

"From Perſia I paſſed into Arabia, where I ſaw a nation at once paſtoral and warlike; who live without any ſettled habitation; whoſe only wealth is their flocks and herds; and who have yet carried on, through all ages, an hereditary war with all mankind,

though they neither covet nor envy their poſſeſſions.

## CHAP. X.

### Imlac's hiſtory continued. A diſſertation upon poetry.

WHEREVER I went, I found that Poetry was conſidered as the higheſt learning, and regarded with a veneration ſomewhat approaching to that which man would pay to the Angelick Nature. And it yet fills me with wonder, that, in almoſt all countries, the moſt ancient poets are conſidered as the beſt: whether it be that every other kind of knowledge is an acquiſition gradually attained, and poetry is a gift conferred at once; or that the firſt poetry of every nation ſurpriſed them as a novelty, and retained the credit by conſent which it received by accident at firſt: or whether the province of poetry is to deſcribe Nature and

and Paſſion, which are always the ſame, and the firſt writers took poſſeſſion of the moſt ſtriking objects for deſcription, and the moſt probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing to thoſe that followed them, but tranſcription of the ſame events, and new combinations of the ſame images. Whatever be the reaſon, it is commonly obſerved that the early writers are in poſſeſſion of nature, and their followers of art: that the firſt excel in ſtrength and invention, and the latter in elegance and refinement.

" I was deſirous to add my name to this illuſtrious fraternity. I read all the poets of Perſia and Arabia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are ſuſpended in the moſque of Mecca. But I ſoon found that no man was ever great by imitation. My deſire of excellence impelled me to transfer my attention to nature and to life. Nature was to be my ſubject, and men to be

my auditors: I could never deſcribe what I had not ſeen: I could not hope to move thoſe with delight or terror, whoſe intereſts and opinions I did not underſtand.

Being now reſolved to be a poet, I ſaw every thing with a new purpoſe; my ſphere of attention was ſuddenly magnified: no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked. I ranged mountains and deſerts for images and reſemblances, and pictured upon my mind every tree of the foreſt and flower of the valley. I obſerved with equal care the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and ſometimes watched the changes of the ſummer clouds. To a poet nothing can be uſeleſs. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, muſt be familiar to his imagination: he muſt be converſant with all that is awfully vaſt or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the

ſky,

ſky, muſt all concur to ſtore his mind with inexhauſtible variety: for every idea is uſeful for the inforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he, who knows moſt, will have moſt power of diverſifying his ſcenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote alluſions and unexpected inſtruction.

"All the appearances of nature I was therefore careful to ſtudy, and every country which I have ſurveyed has contributed ſomething to my poetical powers."

"In ſo wide a ſurvey, ſaid the prince, you muſt ſurely have left much unobſerved. I have lived, till now, within the circuit of theſe mountains, and yet cannot walk abroad without the ſight of ſomething which I had never beheld before, or never heeded."

"The buſineſs of a poet, ſaid Imlac, is to examine, not the individual, but the ſpe-

cies; to remark general properties and large appearances: he does not number the ſtreaks of the tulip, or deſcribe the different ſhades in the verdure of the foreſt. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature ſuch prominent and ſtriking features, as recal the original to every mind; and muſt neglect the minuter diſcriminations which one may have remarked, and another have neglected, for thoſe characteriſtics which are alike obvious to vigilance and careleſſneſs.

"But the knowledge of nature is only half the taſk of a poet; he muſt be acquainted likewiſe with all the modes of life. His character requires that he eſtimate the happineſs and miſery of every condition; obſerve the power of all the paſſions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various inſtitutions and accidental influences of climate or cuſtom, from the ſpritelineſs of infancy to the

the deſpondence of decrepitude. He muſt diveſt himſelf of the prejudices of his age or country; he muſt conſider right and wrong in their abſtracted and invariable ſtate; he muſt diſregard preſent laws and opinions, and riſe to general and tranſcendental truths, which will always be the ſame: he muſt therefore content himſelf with the ſlow progreſs of his name; contemn the applauſe of his own time, and commit his claims to the juſtice of poſterity. He muſt write as the interpreter of nature, and the legiſlator of mankind, and conſider himſelf as preſiding over the thoughts and manners of ſucceſſive generations; as a being ſuperior to time and place. His labour is not yet at an end: he muſt know many languages and many ſciences; and, that his ſtile may be worthy of his thoughts, muſt, by inceſſant practice, familiarize to himſelf every delicacy of ſpeech and grace of harmony."

## CHAP. XI.

### Imlac's narrative continued. A hint on pilgrimage.

IMLAC now felt the enthuſiaſtic fit, and was proceeding to aggrandize his own profeſſion, when the prince cried out, "Enough! Thou haſt convinced me, that no human being can ever be a poet. Proceed now with thy narration."

"To be a poet, ſaid Imlac, is indeed very difficult." "So difficult, returned the prince, that I will at preſent hear no more of his labours. Tell me whither you went when you had ſeen Perſia."

"From Perſia, ſaid the poet, I travelled through Syria, and for three years reſided in Paleſtine, where I converſed with great numbers of the northern and weſtern nations of

of Europe; the nations which are now in poſſeſſion of all power and all knowledge; whoſe armies are irreſiſtible, and whoſe fleets command the remoteſt parts of the globe. When I compared theſe men with the natives of our own kingdom, and thoſe that ſurround us, they appeared almoſt another order of beings. In their countries it is difficult to wiſh for any thing that may not be obtained: a thouſand arts, of which we never heard, are continually labouring for their convenience and pleaſure; and whatever their own climate had denied them, is ſupplied by their commerce."

"By what means, ſaid the prince, are the Europeans thus powerful? or why, ſince they can ſo eaſily viſit Aſia and Africa for trade or conqueſt, cannot the Aſiaticks and Africans invade their coaſts, plant colonies in their ports, and give laws to their natural princes? The ſame wind that carries them back would bring us thither."

"They are more powerful, Sir, than we, anſwered Imlac, becauſe they are wiſer; knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reaſon can be given, but the unſearchable will of the Supreme Being."

"When, ſaid the prince with a ſigh, ſhall I be able to viſit Paleſtine, and mingle with this mighty confluence of nations? Till that happy moment ſhall arrive, let me fill up the time with ſuch repreſentations as thou canſt give me. I am not ignorant of the motive that aſſembles ſuch numbers in that place, and cannot but conſider it as the center of wiſdom and piety, to which the beſt and wiſeſt men of every land muſt be continually reſorting."

"There are ſome nations, ſaid Imlac, that ſend few viſitants to Paleſtine; for many numerous

merous and learned ſects in Europe, concur to cenſure pilgrimage as ſuperſtitious, or deride it as ridiculous."

"You know, ſaid the prince, how little my life has made me acquainted with diverſity of opinions: it will be too long to hear the arguments on both ſides; you, that have conſidered them, tell me the reſult."

"Pilgrimage, ſaid Imlac, like many other acts of piety, may be reaſonable or ſuperſtitious, according to the principles upon which it is performed. Long journeys in ſearch of truth are not commanded. Truth, ſuch as is neceſſary to the regulation of life, is always found where it is honeſtly ſought. Change of place is no natural cauſe of the increaſe of piety, for it inevitably produces diſſipation of mind. Yet, ſince men go every day to view the places where great actions have been performed, and return with ſtronger impreſſions of the event, curioſity of the ſame kind may naturally

naturally diſpoſe us to view that country, whence our religion had its beginning; and I believe no man ſurveys thoſe awful ſcenes without ſome confirmation of holy reſolutions. That the Supreme Being may be more eaſily propitiated in one place than in another, is the dream of idle ſuperſtition; but that ſome places may operate upon our own minds in an uncommon manner, is an opinion which hourly experience will juſtify. He who ſuppoſes that his vices may be more ſucceſsfully combated in Paleſtine, will, perhaps, find himſelf miſtaken, yet he may go thither without folly: he who thinks they will be more freely pardoned, diſhonours at once his reaſon and religion."

"Theſe, ſaid the prince, are European diſtinctions. I will conſider them another time. What have you found to be the effect of knowledge? Are thoſe nations happier than we?"

"There

"There is ſo much infelicity, ſaid the poet, in the world, that ſcarce any man has leiſure from his own diſtreſſes to eſtimate the comparative happineſs of others. Knowledge is certainly one of the means of pleaſure, as is confeſſed by the natural deſire which every mind feels of increaſing its ideas. Ignorance is mere privation, by which nothing can be produced: it is a vacuity in which the ſoul ſits motionleſs and torpid for want of attraction; and, without knowing why, we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget. I am therefore inclined to conclude, that, if nothing counteracts the natural conſequence of learning, we grow more happy as our minds take a wider range.

"In enumerating the particular comforts of life we ſhall find many advantages on the ſide of the Europeans. They cure wounds and diſeaſes with which we languiſh and

and periſh. We ſuffer inclemencies of weather which they can obviate. They have engines for the diſpatch of many laborious works, which we muſt perform by manual induſtry. There is ſuch communication between diſtant places, that one friend can hardly be ſaid to be abſent from another. Their policy removes all publick inconveniencies: they have roads cut through their mountains, and bridges laid upon their rivers. And, if we deſcend to the privacies of life, their habitations are more commodious, and their poſſeſſions are more ſecure."

"They are ſurely happy, ſaid the prince, who have all theſe conveniencies, of which I envy none ſo much as the facility with which ſeparated friends interchange their thoughts."

"The Europeans, anſwered Imlac, are leſs unhappy than we, but they are not happy. Human life is every where a ſtate in which

which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed."

## CHAP. XII.

### The ſtory of Imlac continued.

"I AM not yet willing, ſaid the prince, to ſuppoſe that happineſs is ſo parſimoniouſly diſtributed to mortals; nor can believe but that, if I had the choice of life, I ſhould be able to fill every day with pleaſure. I would injure no man, and ſhould provoke no reſentment: I would relieve every diſtreſs, and ſhould enjoy the benedictions of gratitude. I would chooſe my friends among the wiſe, and my wife among the virtuous; and therefore ſhould be in no danger from treachery, or unkindneſs. My children ſhould, by my care, be learned and pious, and would repay to my age what their childhood had received. What would dare to moleſt him who might call on every ſide to

thou-

thouſands enriched by his bounty, or aſſiſted by his power? And why ſhould not life glide quietly away in the ſoft reciprocation of protection and reverence? All this may be done without the help of European refinements, which appear by their effects to be rather ſpecious than uſeful. Let us leave them and purſue our journey."

"From Paleſtine, ſaid Imlac, I paſſed through many regions of Aſia; in the more civilized kingdoms as a trader, and among the Barbarians of the mountains as a pilgrim. At laſt I began to long for my native country, that I might repoſe after my travels, and fatigues, in the places where I had ſpent my earlieſt years, and gladden my old companions with the recital of my adventures. Often did I figure to myſelf thoſe, with whom I had ſported away the gay hours of dawning life, ſitting round me in its evening, wondering at my tales, and liſtening to my counſels.

"When

"When this thought had taken poſſeſſion of my mind, I conſidered every moment as waſted which did not bring me nearer to Abiſſinia. I haſtened into Egypt, and, notwithſtanding my impatience, was detained ten months in the contemplation of its ancient magnificence, and in enquiries after the remains of its ancient learning. I found in Cairo a mixture of all nations; ſome brought thither by the love of knowledge, ſome by the hope of gain, and many by the deſire of living after their own manner without obſervation, and of lying hid in the obſcurity of multitudes: for, in a city, populous as Cairo, it is poſſible to obtain at the ſame time the gratifications of ſociety, and the ſecrecy of ſolitude.

"From Cairo I travelled to Suez, and embarked on the red ſea, paſſing along the coaſt till I arrived at the port from which I had departed twenty years before. Here

I joined myſelf to a caravan and re-entered my native country.

"I now expected the careſſes of my kinſmen, and the congratulations of my friends, and was not without hope that my father, whatever value he had ſet upon riches, would own with gladneſs and pride, a ſon who was able to add to the felicity and honour of the nation. But I was ſoon convinced that my thoughts were vain. My father had been dead fourteen years, having divided his wealth among my brothers, who were removed to ſome other provinces. Of my companions the greater part was in the grave; of the reſt ſome could with difficulty remember me; and ſome conſidered me as one corrupted by foreign manners.

"A man uſed to viciſſitudes is not eaſily dejected. I forgot, after a time, my diſappointment, and endeavoured to recommend myſelf to the nobles of the kingdom: they admitted

admitted me to their tables, heard my ſtory, and diſmiſſed me. I opened a ſchool, and was prohibited to teach. I then reſolved to ſit down in the quiet of domeſtick life, and addreſſed a lady that was fond of my converſation, but rejected my ſuit, becauſe my father was a merchant.

"Wearied at laſt with ſolicitation and repulſes, I reſolved to hide myſelf for ever from the world, and depend no longer on the opinion or caprice of others. I waited for the time when the gate of the *happy valley* ſhould open, that I might bid farewel to hope and fear: the day came: my performance was diſtinguiſhed with favour, and I reſigned myſelf with joy to perpetual confinement."

"Haſt thou here found happineſs at laſt? ſaid Raſſelas. Tell me without reſerve; art thou content with thy condition? or, doſt thou wiſh to be again wandering and enquiring? All the inhabitants of this valley celebrate

brate their lot, and, at the annual visit of the emperor, invite others to partake of their felicity."

"Great prince, said Imlac, I shall speak the truth: I know not one of all your attendants who does not lament the hour when he entered this retreat. I am less unhappy than the rest, because I have a mind replete with images, which I can vary and combine at pleasure. I can amuse my solitude by the renovation of the knowledge which begins to fade from my memory, and with the recollection of accidents of my past life. Yet all this ends in the sorrowful consideration, that my acquirements are now useless, and that none of my pleasures can be again enjoyed. The rest, whose minds have no impression but of the present moment, are either corroded by malignant passions, or sit stupid in the gloom of perpetual vacancy."

"What

"What paſſions can infeſt thoſe, ſaid the prince, who have no rivals? We are in a place where impotence precludes malice, and where all envy is repreſſed by community of enjoyments."

"There may be community, ſaid Imlac, of material poſſeſſions, but there can never be community of love or of eſteem. It muſt happen that one will pleaſe more than another; he that knows himſelf deſpiſed will always be envious; and ſtill more envious and malevolent, if he is condemned to live in the preſence of thoſe who deſpiſe him. The invitations, by which they allure others to a ſtate which they feel to be wretched, proceed from the natural malignity of hopeleſs miſery. They are weary of themſelves, and of each other, and expect to find relief in new companions. They envy the liberty which their folly has forfeited, and would gladly ſee all mankind impriſoned like themſelves.

"From

"From this crime, however, I am wholly free. No man can ſay that he is wretched by my perſuaſion. I look with pity on the crowds who are annually ſoliciting admiſſion to captivity, and wiſh that it were lawful for me to warn them of their danger."

"My dear Imlac, ſaid the prince, I will open to thee my whole heart, that I have long meditated an eſcape from the happy valley. I have examined the mountains on every ſide, but find myſelf inſuperably barred: teach me the way to break my priſon; thou ſhalt be the companion of my flight, the guide of my rambles, the partner of my fortune, and my ſole director in the *choice of life*."

"Sir, anſwered the poet, your eſcape will be difficult, and, perhaps, you may ſoon repent your curioſity. The world, which you figure to yourſelf ſmooth and quiet as the lake in the valley, you will find a ſea foaming with tempeſts,

tempeſts, and boiling with whirlpools: you will be ſometimes overwhelmed by the waves of violence, and ſometimes daſhed againſt the rocks of treachery. Amidſt wrongs and frauds, competitions and anxieties, you will wiſh a thouſand times for theſe ſeats of quiet, and willingly quit hope to be free from fear."

"Do not ſeek to deter me from my purpoſe, ſaid the prince: I am impatient to ſee what thou haſt ſeen; and, ſince thou art thyſelf weary of the valley, it is evident, that thy former ſtate was better than this. Whatever be the conſequence of my experiment, I am reſolved to judge with my own eyes of the various conditions of men, and then to make deliberately my *choice of life.*

"I am afraid, ſaid Imlac, you are hindered by ſtronger reſtraints than by perſuaſions; yet, if your determination is fixed, I do not counſel you to deſpair. Few things are impoſſible to diligence and ſkill."

CHAP.

## CHAP. XIII.

### Raſſelas diſcovers the means of eſcape.

THE prince now diſmiſſed his favourite to reſt, but the narrative of wonders and novelties filled his mind with perturbation. He revolved all that he had heard, and prepared innumerable queſtions for the morning.

Much of his uneaſineſs was now removed. He had a friend to whom he could impart his thoughts, and whoſe experience could aſſiſt him in his deſigns. His heart was no longer condemned to ſwell with ſilent vexation. He thought that even the *happy valley* might be endured with ſuch a companion, and that, if they could range the world together, he ſhould have nothing further to deſire.

In a few days the water was diſcharged, and the ground dried. The prince and Imlac then walked out together to converſe without the notice of the reſt. The prince, whoſe thoughts were always on the wing, as he paſſed by the gate, ſaid, with a countenance of ſorrow, "Why art thou ſo ſtrong, and why is man ſo weak?"

"Man is not weak, anſwered his companion; knowledge is more than equivalent to force. The maſter of mechanicks laughs at ſtrength. I can burſt the gate, but cannot do it ſecretly. Some other expedient muſt be tried."

As they were walking on the ſide of the mountain, they obſerved that the conies, which the rain had driven from their burrows, had taken ſhelter among the buſhes, and formed holes behind them, tending upwards in an oblique line. "It has been the

opinion of antiquity, ſaid Imlac, that human reaſon borrowed many arts from the inſtinct of animals; let us, therefore, not think ourſelves degraded by learning from the coney. We may eſcape by piercing the mountain in the ſame direction. We will begin where the ſummit hangs over the middle part, and labour upward till we ſhall iſſue out beyond the prominence."

The eyes of the prince, when he heard this propoſal, ſparkled with joy. The execution was eaſy, and the ſucceſs certain.

No time was now loſt. They haſtened early in the morning to chuſe a place proper for their mine. They clambered with great fatigue among crags and brambles, and returned without having diſcovered any part that favoured their deſign. The ſecond and the third day were ſpent in the ſame manner, and with the ſame fruſtration. But, on the fourth, they found a ſmall cavern, concealed by

by a thicket, where they reſolved to make their experiment.

Imlac procured inſtruments proper to hew ſtone and remove earth, and they fell to their work on the next day with more eagerneſs than vigour. They were preſently exhauſted by their efforts, and ſat down to pant upon the graſs. The prince, for a moment, appeared to be diſcouraged. "Sir, ſaid his companion, practice will enable us to continue our labour for a longer time; mark, however, how far we have advanced, and you will find that our toil will ſome time have an end. Great works are performed, not by ſtrength, but perſeverance: yonder palace was raiſed by ſingle ſtones, yet you ſee its height and ſpaciouſneſs. He that ſhall walk with vigour three hours a day, will paſs in ſeven years a ſpace equal to the circumference of the globe."

They returned to their labour day after day, and, in a ſhort time, found a fiſſure in the rock, which enabled them to paſs far with very little obſtruction. This Raſſelas conſidered as a good omen. "Do not diſturb your mind, ſaid Imlac, with other hopes or fears than reaſon may ſuggeſt: if you are pleaſed with prognoſticks of good, you will be terrified likewiſe with tokens of evil, and your whole life will be a prey to ſuperſtition. Whatever facilitates our work is more than an omen, it is a cauſe of ſucceſs. This is one of thoſe pleaſing ſurpriſes which often happen to active reſolution. Many things difficult to deſign prove eaſy to performance."

## CHAP. XIV.

### Raſſelas and Imlac receive an unexpected viſit.

THEY had now wrought their way to the middle, and ſolaced their labour with

with the approach of liberty, when the prince, coming down to refreſh himſelf with air, found his ſiſter Nekayah ſtanding before the mouth of the cavity. He ſtarted and ſtood confuſed, afraid to tell his deſign, and yet hopeleſs to conceal it. A few moments determined him to repoſe on her fidelity, and ſecure her ſecrecy by a declaration without reſerve.

"Do not imagine, ſaid the princeſs, that I came hither as a ſpy: I had often obſerved from my window, that you and Imlac directed your walk every day towards the ſame point, but I did not ſuppoſe you had any better reaſon for the preference than a cooler ſhade, or more fragrant bank; nor followed you with any other deſign than to partake of your converſation. Since then not ſuſpicion but fondneſs has detected you, let me not loſe the advantage of my diſcovery. I am equally weary of confinement with yourſelf, and not leſs deſirous of knowing what is done

or ſuffered in the world. Permit me to fly with you from this taſteleſs tranquillity, which will yet grow more loathſome when you have left me. You may deny me to accompany you, but cannot hinder me from following."

The prince, who loved Nekayah above his other ſiſters, had no inclination to refuſe her requeſt, and grieved that he had loſt an opportunity of ſhewing his confidence by a voluntary communication. It was therefore agreed that ſhe ſhould leave the valley with them; and that, in the mean time, ſhe, ſhould watch, leſt any other ſtraggler ſhould, by chance or curioſity, follow them to the mountain.

At length their labour was at an end; they ſaw light beyond the prominence, and, iſſuing to the top of the mountain, beheld the Nile, yet a narrow current, wandering beneath them.

The

The prince looked round with rapture, anticipated all the pleaſures of travel, and in thought was already tranſported beyond his father's dominions. Imlac, though very joyful at his eſcape, had leſs expectation of pleaſure in the world, which he had before tried, and of which he had been weary.

Raſſelas was ſo much delighted with a wider horizon, that he could not ſoon be perſuaded to return into the valley. He informed his ſiſter that the way was open, and that nothing now remained but to prepare for their departure.

## CHAP. XV.

### The prince and princeſs leave the valley, and ſee many wonders.

THE prince and princeſs had jewels ſufficient to make them rich whenever

they came into a place of commerce, which, by Imlac's direction, they hid in their cloaths, and, on the night of the next full moon, all left the valley. The princeſs was followed only by a ſingle favourite, who did not know whither ſhe was going.

They clambered through the cavity, and began to go down on the other ſide. The princeſs and her maid turned their eyes towards every part, and, ſeeing nothing to bound their proſpect, conſidered themſelves as in danger of being loſt in a dreary vacuity. They ſtopped and trembled. "I am almoſt afraid, ſaid the princeſs, to begin a journey of which I cannot perceive an end, and to venture into this immenſe plain where I may be approached on every ſide by men whom I never ſaw." The prince felt nearly the ſame emotions, though he thought it more manly to conceal them.

Imlac

Imlac ſmiled at their terrors, and encouraged them to proceed; but the princeſs continued irreſolute, till ſhe had been imperceptibly drawn forward too far to return.

In the morning they found ſome ſhepherds in the field, who ſet milk and fruits before them. The princeſs wondered that ſhe did not ſee a palace ready for her reception, and a table ſpread with delicacies; but, being faint and hungry, ſhe drank the milk and eat the fruits, and thought them of a higher flavour than the products of the valley.

They travelled forward by eaſy journeys, being all unaccuſtomed to toil or difficulty, and knowing, that though they might be miſſed, they could not be purſued. In a few days they came into a more populous region, where Imlac was diverted with the admiration which his companions expreſſed at the

diverſity of manners, ſtations and employments.

Their dreſs was ſuch as might not bring upon them the ſuſpicion of having any thing to conceal, yet the prince, wherever he came, expected to be obeyed, and the princeſs was frighted, becauſe thoſe that came into her preſence did not proſtrate themſelves before her. Imlac was forced to obſerve them with great vigilance, leſt they ſhould betray their rank by their unuſual behaviour, and detained them ſeveral weeks in the firſt village to accuſtom them to the ſight of common mortals.

By degrees the royal wanderers were taught to underſtand that they had for a time laid aſide their dignity, and were to expect only ſuch regard as liberality and courteſy could procure. And Imlac having, by many admonitions, prepared them to endure the tumults of a port, and the ruggedneſs

of

of the commercial race, brought them down to the ſea-coaſt.

The prince and his ſiſter, to whom every thing was new, were gratified equally at all places, and therefore remained for ſome months at the port without any inclination to paſs further. Imlac was content with their ſtay, becauſe he did not think it ſafe to expoſe them, unpractiſed in the world, to the hazards of a foreign country.

At laſt he began to fear leſt they ſhould be diſcovered, and propoſed to fix a day for their departure. They had no pretenſions to judge for themſelves, and referred the whole ſcheme to his direction. He therefore took paſſage in a ſhip to Suez; and, when the time came, with great difficulty prevailed on the princeſs to enter the veſſel. They had a quick and proſperous voyage, and from Suez travelled by land to Cairo.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XVI.

### They enter Cairo, and find every man happy.

AS they approached the city, which filled the ſtrangers with aſtoniſhment, "This, ſaid Imlac to the prince, is the place where travellers and merchants aſſemble from all the corners of the earth. You will here find men of every character, and every occupation. Commerce is here honourable: I will act as a merchant, and you ſhall live as ſtrangers, who have no other end of travel than curioſity; it will ſoon be obſerved that we are rich; our reputation will procure us acceſs to all whom we ſhall deſire to know; you will ſee all the conditions of humanity, and enable yourſelf at leiſure to make your *choice of life*."

They now entered the town, ſtunned by the noiſe, and offended by the crowds. In-

ſtruction

ſtruction had not yet ſo prevailed over habit, but that they wondered to ſee themſelves paſs undiſtinguiſhed along the ſtreet, and met by the loweſt of the people without reverence or notice. The princeſs could not at firſt bear the thought of being levelled with the vulgar, and, for ſome days, continued in her chamber, where ſhe was ſerved by her favourite as in the palace of the valley.

Imlac, who underſtood traffick, ſold part of the jewels the next day, and hired a houſe, which he adorned with ſuch magnificence, that he was immediately conſidered as a merchant of great wealth. His politeneſs attracted many acquaintance, and his generoſity made him courted by many dependants. His table was crowded by men of every nation, who all admired his knowledge and ſolicited his favour. His companions, not being able to mix in the converſation, could make no diſcovery of their ignorance or ſurpriſe, and were gradually initiated in the world, as they gained knowledge of the language. The

The prince had, by frequent lectures, been taught the uſe and nature of money; but the ladies could not, for a long time, comprehend what the merchants did with ſmall pieces of gold and ſilver, or why things of ſo little uſe ſhould be received as equivalent to the neceſſaries of life.

They ſtudied the language two years, while Imlac was preparing to ſet before them the various ranks and conditions of mankind. He grew acquainted with all who had any thing uncommon in their fortune or conduct. He frequented the voluptuous and the frugal, the idle and the buſy, the merchants and the men of learning.

The prince, being now able to converſe with fluency, and having learned the caution neceſſary to be obſerved in his intercourſe with ſtrangers, began to accompany Imlac to places

places of reſort, and to enter into all aſſemblies, that he might make his *choice of life*.

For ſome time he thought choice needleſs, becauſe all appeared to him equally happy. Wherever he went he met gaiety and kindneſs, and heard the ſong of joy, or the laugh of careleſsneſs. He began to believe that the world overflowed with univerſal plenty, and that nothing was with-held either from want or merit; that every hand ſhowered liberality, and every heart melted with benevolence: "and who then, ſays he, will be ſuffered to be wretched?"

Imlac permitted the pleaſing deluſion, and was unwilling to cruſh the hope of inexperience, till one day, having ſat a while ſilent, "I know not, ſaid the prince, what can be the reaſon that I am more unhappy than any of our friends. I ſee them perpetually and unalterably chearful, but feel my own mind reſtleſs and uneaſy. I am unſatisfied

fied with thoſe pleaſures which I ſeem moſt to court; I live in the crowds of jollity, not ſo much to enjoy company as to ſhun myſelf, and am only loud and merry to conceal my ſadneſs."

"Every man, ſaid Imlac, may, by examining his own mind, gueſs what paſſes in the minds of others: when you feel that your own gaiety is counterfeit, it may juſtly lead you to ſuſpect that of your companions not to be ſincere. Envy is commonly reciprocal. We are long before we are convinced that happineſs is never to be found, and each believes it poſſeſſed by others, to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himſelf. In the aſſembly, where you paſſed the laſt night, there appeared ſuch ſprightlineſs of air, and volatility of fancy, as might have ſuited beings of an higher order, formed to inhabit ſerener regions inacceſſible to care or ſorrow: yet, believe me, prince, there was not one who did not

not dread the moment when ſolitude ſhould deliver him to the tyranny of reflection."

"This, ſaid the prince, may be true of others ſince it is true of me; yet, whatever be the general infelicity of man, one condition is more happy than another, and wiſdom ſurely directs us to take the leaſt evil in the *choice of life*."

"The cauſes of good and evil, anſwered Imlac, are ſo various and uncertain, ſo often entangled with each other, ſo diverſified by various relations, and ſo much ſubject to accidents which cannot be foreſeen, that he who would fix his condition upon inconteſtable reaſons of preference, muſt live and die enquiring and deliberating."

"But ſurely, ſaid Raſſelas, the wiſe men, to whom we liſten with reverence and wonder, choſe that mode of life for themſelves which

which they thought moſt likely to make them happy."

"Very few, ſaid the poet, live by choice. Every man is placed in his preſent condition by cauſes which acted without his foreſight, and with which he did not always willingly co-operate; and therefore you will rarely meet one who does not think the lot of his neighbour better than his own."

"I am pleaſed to think, ſaid the prince, that my birth has given me at leaſt one advantage over others, by enabling me to determine for myſelf. I have here the world before me; I will review it at leiſure: ſurely happineſs is ſomewhere to be found."

CHAP.

## CHAP. XVII.

### The prince associates with young men of spirit and gaiety.

RASSELAS rose next day, and resolved to begin his experiments upon life. "Youth, cried he, is the time of gladness: I will join myself to the young men, whose only business is to gratify their desires, and whose time is all spent in a succession of enjoyments."

To such societies he was readily admitted, but a few days brought him back weary and disgusted. Their mirth was without images, their laughter without motive; their pleasures were gross and sensual, in which the mind had no part; their conduct was at once wild and mean; they laughed at order and at law, but the frown of power dejected, and the eye of wisdom abashed them.

The

The prince ſoon concluded, that he ſhould never be happy in a courſe of life of which he was aſhamed. He thought it unſuitable to a reaſonable being to act without a plan, and to be ſad or chearful only by chance. "Happineſs, ſaid he, muſt be ſomething ſolid and permanent, without fear and without uncertainty."

But his young companions had gained ſo much of his regard by their frankneſs and courteſy, that he could not leave them without warning and remonſtrance. "My friends, ſaid he, I have ſeriouſly conſidered our manners and our proſpects, and find that we have miſtaken our own intereſt. The firſt years of man muſt make proviſion for the laſt. He that never thinks never can be wiſe. Perpetual levity muſt end in ignorance; and intemperance, though it may fire the ſpirits for an hour, will make life ſhort or miſerable. Let us conſider that youth is of no long duration,

duration, and that in maturer age, when the enchantments of fancy ſhall ceaſe, and phantoms of delight dance no more about us, we ſhall have no comforts but the eſteem of wiſe men, and the means of doing good. Let us, therefore, ſtop, while to ſtop is in our power: let us live as men who are ſome time to grow old, and to whom it will be the moſt dreadful of all evils not to count their paſt years but by follies, and to be reminded of their former luxuriance of health only by the maladies which riot has produced."

They ſtared awhile in ſilence one upon another, and, at laſt, drove him away by a general chorus of continued laughter.

The conſciouſneſs that his ſentiments were juſt, and his intentions kind, was ſcarcely ſufficient to ſupport him againſt the horror of deriſion. But he recovered his tranquillity, and purſued his ſearch.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XVIII.

### The prince finds a wiſe and happy man.

AS he was one day walking in the ſtreet, he ſaw a ſpacious building which all were, by the open doors, invited to enter: he followed the ſtream of people, and found it a hall or ſchool of declamation, in which profeſſors read lectures to their auditory. He fixed his eye upon a ſage raiſed above the reſt, who diſcourſed with great energy on the government of the paſſions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronunciation clear, and his diction elegant. He ſhewed, with great ſtrength of ſentiment, and variety of illuſtration, that human nature is degraded and debaſed, when the lower faculties predominate over the higher; that when fancy, the parent of paſſion, uſurps the dominion of the mind, nothing enſues but the

the natural effect of unlawful government, perturbation and confuſion; that ſhe betrays the fortreſſes of the intellect to rebels, and excites her children to ſedition againſt reaſon, their lawful ſovereign. He compared reaſon to the ſun, of which the light is conſtant, uniform, and laſting; and fancy to a meteor, of bright but tranſitory luſtre, irregular in its motion, and deluſive in its direction.

He then communicated the various precepts given from time to time for the conqueſt of paſſion, and diſplayed the happineſs of thoſe who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the ſlave of fear, nor the fool of hope; is no more emaciated by envy, inflamed by anger, emaſculated by tenderneſs, or depreſſed by grief; but walks on calmly through the tumults or the privacies, of life, as the ſun purſues alike his courſe through the calm or the ſtormy ſky.

He

He enumerated many examples of heroes immoveable by pain or pleaſure, who looked with indifference on thoſe modes or accidents to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil. He exhorted his hearers to lay aſide their prejudices, and arm themſelves againſt the ſhafts of malice or misfortune, by invulnerable patience; concluding, that this ſtate only was happineſs, and that this happineſs was in every one's power.

Raſſelas liſtened to him with the veneration due to the inſtructions of a ſuperior being, and, waiting for him at the door, humbly implored the liberty of viſiting ſo great a maſter of true wiſdom. The lecturer heſitated a moment, when Raſſelas put a purſe of gold into his hand, which he received with a mixture of joy and wonder.

"I have found, ſaid the prince, at his return to Imlac, a man who can teach all that is neceſſary

neceſſary to be known, who, from the unſhaken throne of rational fortitude, looks down on the ſcenes of life changing beneath him. He ſpeaks, and attention watches his lips. He reaſons, and conviction cloſes his periods. This man ſhall be my future guide: I will learn his doctrines and imitate his life."

"Be not too haſty, ſaid Imlac, to truſt, or to admire, the teachers of morality: they diſcourſe like angels, but they live like men."

Raſſelas, who could not conceive how any man could reaſon ſo forcibly without feeling the cogency of his own arguments, paid his viſit in a few days, and was denied admiſſion. He had now learned the power of money, and made his way by a piece of gold to the inner apartment, where he found the philoſopher in a room half darkened, with his eyes miſty, and his face pale. "Sir, ſaid

he, you are come at a time when all human friendſhip is uſeleſs; what I ſuffer cannot be remedied, what I have loſt cannot be ſupplied. My daughter, my only daughter, from whoſe tenderneſs I expected all the comforts of my age, died laſt night of a fever. My views, my purpoſes, my hopes are at an end: I am now a lonely being diſunited from ſociety."

"Sir, ſaid the prince, mortality is an event by which a wiſe man can never be ſurpriſed: we know that death is always near, and it ſhould therefore always be expected." "Young man, anſwered the philoſopher, you ſpeak like one that has never felt the pangs of ſeparation." "Have you then forgot the precepts, ſaid Raſſelas, which you ſo powerfully enforced? Has wiſdom no ſtrength to arm the heart againſt calamity? Conſider, that external things are naturally variable, but truth and reaſon are always the ſame." "What comfort, ſaid the mourner, can truth

truth and reaſon afford me? of what effect are they now, but to tell me, that my daughter will not be reſtored?"

The prince, whoſe humanity would not ſuffer him to inſult miſery with reproof, went away convinced of the emptineſs of rhetorical ſound, and the inefficacy of poliſhed periods and ſtudied ſentences.

## CHAP. XIX.

### A Glimpſe of paſtoral life.

HE was ſtill eager upon the ſame enquiry; and, having heard of a hermit, that lived near the loweſt cataract of the Nile, and filled the whole country with the fame of his ſanctity, reſolved to viſit his retreat, and enquire whether that felicity, which publick life could not afford, was to be found in ſolitude; and whether a man, whoſe age and virtue made him venerable, could teach

any peculiar art of ſhunning evils, or enduring them.

Imlac and the princeſs agreed to accompany him, and, after the neceſſary preparations, they began their journey. Their way lay through fields, where ſhepherds tended their flocks, and the lambs were playing upon the paſture. "This, ſaid the poet, is the life which has been often celebrated for its innocence and quiet: let us paſs the heat of the day among the ſhepherds tents, and know whether all our ſearches are not to terminate in paſtoral ſimplicity."

The propoſal pleaſed them, and they induced the ſhepherds, by ſmall preſents and familiar queſtions, to tell their opinion of their own ſtate: they were ſo rude and ignorant, ſo little able to compare the good with the evil of the occupation, and ſo indiſtinct in their narratives and deſcriptions, that very little could be learned from them. But it was evident

evident that their hearts were cankered with diſcontent; that they conſidered themſelves as condemned to labour for the luxury of the rich, and looked up with ſtupid malevolence towards thoſe that were placed above them.

The princeſs pronounced with vehemence, that ſhe would never ſuffer theſe envious ſavages to be her companions, and that ſhe ſhould not ſoon be deſirous of ſeeing any more ſpecimens of ruſtick happineſs; but could not believe that all the accounts of primeval pleaſures were fabulous, and was yet in doubt whether life had any thing that could be juſtly preferred to the placid gratifications of fields and woods. She hoped that the time would come, when with a few virtuous and elegant companions, ſhe ſhould gather flowers planted by her own hand, fondle the lambs of her own ewe, and liſten, without care, among brooks and breezes, to one of her maidens reading in the ſhade.

## CHAP. XX.

### The danger of proſperity.

ON the next day they continued their journey, till the heat compelled them to look round for ſhelter. At a ſmall diſtance they ſaw a thick wood, which they no ſooner entered than they perceived that they were approaching the habitations of men. The ſhrubs were diligently cut away to open walks where the ſhades were darkeſt; the boughs of oppoſite trees were artificially interwoven; ſeats of flowery turf were raiſed in vacant ſpaces, and a rivulet that wantoned along the ſide of a winding path, had its banks ſometimes opened into ſmall baſons, and its ſtream ſometimes obſtructed by little mounds of ſtone heaped together to increaſe its murmurs.

They

They paſſed ſlowly through the wood, delighted with ſuch unexpected accommodations, and entertained each other with conjecturing what, or who, he could be, that, in thoſe rude and unfrequented regions, had leiſure and art for ſuch harmleſs luxury.

As they advanced, they heard the ſound of muſick, and ſaw youths and virgins dancing in the grove; and, going ſtill further, beheld a ſtately palace built upon a hill ſurrounded with woods. The laws of eaſtern hoſpitality allowed them to enter, and the maſter welcomed them like a man liberal and wealthy.

He was ſkilful enough in appearances ſoon to diſcern that they were no common gueſts, and ſpread his table with magnificence. The eloquence of Imlac caught his attention, and the lofty courteſy of the princeſs excited his reſpect. When they offered to depart, he

entreated their ſtay, and was the next day ſtill more unwilling to diſmiſs them than before. They were eaſily perſuaded to ſtop, and civility grew up in time to freedom and confidence.

The prince now ſaw all the domeſticks chearful, and all the face of nature ſmiling round the place, and could not forbear to hope that he ſhould find here what he was ſeeking; but when he was congratulating the maſter upon his poſſeſſions, he anſwered with a ſigh, "My condition has indeed the appearance of happineſs, but appearances are deluſive. My proſperity puts my life in danger; the Baſſa of Egypt is my enemy, incenſed only by my wealth and popularity. I have been hitherto protected againſt him by the princeſ of the country; but as the favour of the great is uncertain, I know not how ſoon my defenders may be perſuaded to ſhare the plunder with the Baſſa. I have ſent my treaſures into a diſtant country, and,

upon

upon the firſt alarm, am prepared to follow them. Then will my enemies riot in my manſion, and enjoy the gardens which I have planted."

They all joined in lamenting his danger, and deprecating his exile; and the princeſs was ſo much diſturbed with the tumult of grief and indignation, that ſhe retired to her apartment. They continued with their kind inviter a few days longer, and then went forward to find the hermit.

## CHAP. XXI.

### The happineſs of ſolitude. The hermit's hiſtory.

THEY came on the third day, by the direction of the peaſants, to the hermit's cell: it was a cavern in the ſide of a mountain, over-ſhadowed with palm-trees; at ſuch a diſtance from the cataract, that no-

thing more was heard than a gentle uniform murmur, ſuch as compoſed the mind to penſive meditation, eſpecially when it was aſſiſted by the wind whiſtling among the branches. The firſt rude eſſay of nature had been ſo much improved by human labour, that the cave contained ſeveral apartments, appropriated to different uſes, and often afforded lodging to travellers, whom darkneſs or tempeſts happened to overtake.

The hermit ſat on a bench at the door, to enjoy the coldneſs of the evening. On one ſide lay a book with pens and papers, on the other mechanical inſtruments of various kinds. As they approached him unregarded, the princeſs obſerved that he had not the countenance of a man that had found, or could teach, the way to happineſs.

They ſaluted him with great reſpect, which he repaid like a man not unaccuſtomed to the forms of courts. "My children, ſaid

ſaid he, if you have loſt your way, you ſhall be willingly ſupplied with ſuch conveniencies for the night as this cavern will afford. I have all that nature requires, and you will not expect delicacies in a hermit's cell.

They thanked him, and, entering, were pleaſed with the neatneſs and regularity of the place. The hermit ſet fleſh and wine before them, though he fed only upon fruits and water. His diſcourſe was chearful without levity, and pious without enthuſiaſm. He ſoon gained the eſteem of his gueſts, and the princeſs repented of her haſty cenſure.

At laſt Imlac began thus: "I do not now wonder that your reputation is ſo far extended; we have heard at Cairo of your wiſdom, and came hither to implore your direction for this young man and maiden in the *choice of life.*"

"To

"To him that lives well, anſwered the hermit, every form of life is good; nor can I give any other rule for choice, than to remove from all apparent evil."

"He will remove moſt certainly from evil, ſaid the prince, who ſhall devote himſelf to that ſolitude which you have recommended by your example."

"I have indeed lived fifteen years in ſolitude, ſaid the hermit, but have no deſire that my example ſhould gain any imitators. In my youth I profeſſed arms, and was raiſed by degrees to the higheſt military rank. I have traverſed wide countries at the head of my troops, and ſeen many battles and ſieges. At laſt, being diſguſted by the preferment of a younger officer, and finding my vigour beginning to decay, I reſolved to cloſe my life in peace, having found the world full of ſnares, diſcord, and miſery. I had once eſcaped from the purſuit of the enemy by the

ſhelter

ſhelter of this cavern, and therefore choſe it for my final reſidence. I employed artificers to form it into chambers, and ſtored it with all that I was likely to want.

"For ſome time after my retreat, I rejoiced like a tempeſt-beaten ſailor at his entrance into the harbour, being delighted with the ſudden change of the noiſe and hurry of war, to ſtillneſs and repoſe. When the pleaſure of novelty went away, I employed my hours in examining the plants which grow in the valley, and the minerals which I collected from the rocks. But that enquiry is now grown taſteleſs and irkſome. I have been for ſome time unſettled and diſtracted: my mind is diſturbed with a thouſand perplexities of doubt, and vanities of imagination, which hourly prevail upon me, becauſe I have no opportunities of relaxation or diverſion. I am ſometimes aſhamed to think that I could not ſecure myſelf from vice, but by retiring from the practice of virtue, and begin

gin to ſuſpect that I was rather impelled by reſentment, than led by devotion, into ſolitude. My fancy riots in ſcenes of folly, and I lament that I have loſt ſo much, and have gained ſo little. In ſolitude, if I eſcape the example of bad men, I want likewiſe the counſel and converſation of the good. I have been long comparing the evils with the advantages of ſociety, and reſolve to return into the world to-morrow. The life of a ſolitary man will be certainly miſerable, but not certainly devout."

They heard his reſolution with ſurpriſe, but, after a ſhort pauſe, offered to conduct him to Cairo. He dug up a conſiderable treaſure which he had hid among the rocks, and accompanied them to the city, on which, as he approached it, he gazed with rapture.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XXII.

### The happineſs of a life led according to nature.

RASSELAS went often to an aſſembly of learned men, who met at ſtated times to unbend their minds, and compare their opinions. Their manners were ſomewhat coarſe, but their converſation was inſtructive, and their diſputations acute, though ſometimes too violent, and often continued till neither controvertiſt remembered upon what queſtion they began. Some faults were almoſt general among them: every one was deſirous to dictate to the reſt, and every one was pleaſed to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated.

In this aſſembly Raſſelas was relating his interview with the hermit, and the wonder with

with which he heard him cenſure a courſe of life which he had ſo deliberately choſen, and ſo laudably followed. The ſentiments of the hearers were various. Some were of opinion, that the folly of his choice had been juſtly puniſhed by condemnation to perpetual perſeverance. One of the youngeſt among them, with great vehemence, pronounced him an hypocrite. Some talked of the right of ſociety to the labour of individuals, and conſidered retirement as a deſertion of duty. Others readily allowed, that there was a time when the claims of the publick were ſatisfied, and when a man might properly ſequeſter himſelf, to review his life, and purify his heart.

One, who appeared more affected with the narrative than the reſt, thought it likely, that the hermit would, in a few years, go back to his retreat, and, perhaps, if ſhame did not reſtrain, or death intercept him, return once more from his retreat into the world:

world: "For the hope of happineſs, ſays he, is ſo ſtrongly impreſſed, that the longeſt experience is not able to efface it. Of the preſent ſtate, whatever it be, we feel, and are forced to confeſs, the miſery, yet, when the ſame ſtate is again at a diſtance, imagination paints it as deſirable. But the time will ſurely come, when deſire will be no longer our torment, and no man ſhall be wretched but by his own fault."

"This, ſaid a philoſopher, who had heard him with tokens of great impatience, is the preſent condition of a wiſe man. The time is already come, when none are wretched but by their own fault. Nothing is more idle, than to enquire after happineſs, which nature has kindly placed within our reach. The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that univerſal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impreſſed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by deſtiny, not inſtilled

inſtilled by education, but infuſed at our nativity. He that lives according to nature, will ſuffer nothing from the deluſions of hope, or importunities of deſire: he will receive and reject with equability of temper; and act or ſuffer as the reaſon of things ſhall alternately preſcribe. Other men may amuſe themſelves with ſubtle definitions, or intricate ratiocination. Let them learn to be wiſe by eaſier means: let them obſerve the hind of the foreſt, and the linnet of the grove: let them conſider the life of animals, whoſe motions are regulated by inſtinct; they obey their guide and are happy. Let us therefore, at length, ceaſe to diſpute, and learn to live; throw away the incumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with ſo much pride and pomp do not underſtand, and carry with us this ſimple and intelligible maxim, That deviation from nature is deviation from happineſs."

When

When he had ſpoken, he looked round him with a placid air, and enjoyed the conſciouſneſs of his own beneficence. "Sir, ſaid the prince, with great modeſty, as I, like all the reſt of mankind, am deſirous of felicity, my cloſeſt attention has been fixed upon your diſcourſe: I doubt not the truth of a poſition which a man ſo learned has ſo confidently advanced. Let me only know what it is to live according to nature."

"When I find young men ſo humble and ſo docile, ſaid the philoſopher, I can deny them no information which my ſtudies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature, is to act always with due regard to the fitneſs ariſing from the relations and qualities of cauſes and effects; to concur with the great and unchangeable ſcheme of univerſal felicity; to co-operate with the general diſpoſition and tendency of the preſent ſyſtem of things."

The

The prince ſoon found that this was one of the ſages whom he ſhould underſtand leſs as he heard him longer. He therefore bowed and was ſilent, and the philoſopher, ſuppoſing him ſatisfied, and the reſt vanquiſhed, roſe up and departed with the air of a man that had co-operated with the preſent ſyſtem.

## CHAP. XXIII.

### The prince and his ſiſter divide between them the work of obſervation.

RASSELAS returned home full of reflexions, doubtful how to direct his future ſteps. Of the way to happineſs he found the learned and ſimple equally ignorant; but, as he was yet young, he flattered himſelf that he had time remaining for more experiments, and further enquiries. He com-

communicated to Imlac his obſervations and his doubts, but was anſwered by him with new doubts, and remarks that gave him no comfort. He therefore diſcourſed more frequently and freely with his ſiſter, who had yet the ſame hope with himſelf, and always aſſiſted him to give ſome reaſon why, though he had been hitherto fruſtrated, he might ſucceed at laſt.

"We have hitherto, ſaid, ſhe, known but little of the world: we have never yet been either great or mean. In our own country, though we had royalty, we had no power, and in this we have not yet ſeen the private receſſes of domeſtic peace. Imlac favours not our ſearch, leſt we ſhould in time find him miſtaken. We will divide the taſk between us: you ſhall try what is to be found in the ſplendor of courts, and I will range the ſhades of humbler life. Perhaps command and authority may be the ſupreme bleſſings, as they afford moſt opportunities

of

of doing good: or, perhaps, what this world can give may be found in the modeſt habitations of middle fortune; too low for great deſigns, and too high for penury and diſtreſs."

## CHAP. XXIV.

### The prince examines the happineſs of high ſtations.

RASSELAS applauded the deſign, and appeared next day with a ſplendid retinue at the court of the Baſſa. He was ſoon diſtinguiſhed for his magnificence, and admitted, as a prince whoſe curioſity had brought him from diſtant countries, to an intimacy with the great officers, and frequent converſation with the Baſſa himſelf.

He was at firſt inclined to believe, that the man muſt be pleaſed with his own condition, whom all approached with reverence, and heard with obedience, and who had the power

power to extend his edicts to a whole kingdom. "There can be no pleasure, said he, equal to that of feeling at once the joy of thousands all made happy by wise administration. Yet, since, by the law of subordination, this sublime delight can be in one nation but the lot of one, it is surely reasonable to think there is some satisfaction more popular and accessible, and that millions can hardly be subjected to the will of a single man, only to fill his particular breast with incommunicable content."

These thoughts were often in his mind, and he found no solution of the difficulty. But as presents and civilities gained him more familiarity, he found that almost every man that stood high in employment hated all the rest, and was hated by them, and that their lives were a continual succession of plots and detections, stratagems and escapes, faction and treachery. Many of those, who surrounded the Bassa, were sent only to watch

and

and report his conduct; every tongue was muttering cenſure, and every eye was ſearching for a fault.

At laſt the letters of revocation arrived, the Baſſa was carried in chains to Conſtantinople, and his name was mentioned no more.

"What are we now to think of the prerogatives of power, ſaid Raſſelas to his ſiſter; is it without any efficacy to good? or, is the ſubordinate degree only dangerous, and the ſupreme ſafe and glorious? Is the Sultan the only happy man in his dominions? or, is the Sultan himſelf ſubject to the torments of ſuſpicion, and the dread of enemies?"

In a ſhort time the ſecond Baſſa was depoſed. The Sultan, that had advanced him, was murdered by the Janiſaries, and his ſucceſſor had other views and different favourites.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XXV.

### The princeſs purſues her enquiry with more diligence than ſucceſs.

THE princeſs, in the mean time, inſinuated herſelf into many families; for there are few doors, through which liberality, joined with good humour, cannot find its way. The daughters of many houſes were airy and chearful, but Nekayah had been too long accuſtomed to the converſation of Imlac and her brother to be much pleaſed with childiſh levity and prattle which had no meaning. She found their thoughts narrow, their wiſhes low, and their merriment often artificial. Their pleaſures, poor as they were, could not be preſerved pure, but were embittered by petty competitions and worthleſs emulation. They were always jealous of the beauty of each other; of a quality to which ſolicitude can add nothing, and from which

detraction can take nothing away. Many were in love with triflers like themſelves, and many fancied that they were in love when in truth they were only idle. Their affection was ſeldom fixed on ſenſe or virtue, and therefore ſeldom ended but in vexation. Their grief, however, like their joy, was tranſient; every thing floated in their mind unconnected with the paſt or future, ſo that one deſire eaſily gave way to another, as a ſecond ſtone caſt into the water effaces and confounds the circles of the firſt.

With theſe girls ſhe played as with inoffenſive animals, and found them proud of her countenance, and weary of her company.

But her purpoſe was to examine more deeply, and her affability eaſily perſuaded the hearts that were ſwelling with ſorrow to diſcharge their ſecrets in her ear: and thoſe whom hope flattered, or proſperity delighted,

lighted, often courted her to partake their pleaſures.

The princeſs and her brother commonly met in the evening in a private ſummer-houſe on the bank of the Nile, and related to each other the occurrences of the day. As they were ſitting together, the princeſs caſt her eyes upon the river that flowed before her. "Anſwer, ſaid ſhe, great father of waters, thou that rolleſt thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the daughter of thy native king. Tell me if thou watereſt, through all thy courſe, a ſingle habitation from which thou doſt not hear the murmurs of complaint."

"You are then, ſaid Raſſelas, not more ſucceſsful in private houſes than I have been in courts." "I have, ſince the laſt partition of our provinces, ſaid the princeſs, enabled myſelf to enter familiarly into many families, where there was the faireſt ſhow of

proſperity and peace, and know not one houſe that is not haunted by ſome fiend that deſtroys its quiet.

" I did not ſeek eaſe among the poor, becauſe I concluded that there it could not be found. But I ſaw many poor whom I had ſuppoſed to live in affluence. Poverty has, in large cities, very different appearances: it is often concealed in ſplendor, and often in extravagance. It is the care of a very great part of mankind to conceal their indigence from the reſt: they ſupport themſelves by temporary expedients, and every day is loſt in contriving for the morrow.

" This, however, was an evil, which, though frequent, I ſaw with leſs pain, becauſe I could relieve it. Yet ſome have refuſed my bounties; more offended with my quickneſs to detect their wants, than pleaſed with my readineſs to ſuccour them: and others, whoſe exigencies compelled them to admit

admit my kindneſs, have never been able to forgive their benefactreſs. Many, however, have been ſincerely grateful without the oſtentation of gratitude, or the hope of other favours."

END of the FIRST VOLUME.